

ADVENTURE CODER



ISSUE 17

ADDRESS

The address for ADVENTURE CODER is:

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These cost just the same as the current issue.

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The costs to place an advert in ADVENTURE CODER are:

£5 - inside full page
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Note that the back page is always on coloured paper and you are buying the whole page - it cannot be split into half or quarter, unlike the inside pages, which are always on white paper.

LETTERS

I'll be only too glad to read your letters. However, if you want a personal reply outside the magazine, please enclose a stamped envelope with your address on. If you do not want your letter printed in this magazine you must write "NOT FOR PRINTING" on top.

FORMAT

This is an amateur magazine produced on an irregular basis as a non-profit hobby.

PRODUCTION

I design the whole magazine and paste up the artwork. Mandy Rodrigues of ADVENTURE PROBE then publishes it with the help of her husband John.

CONTRIBUTIONS

These are always welcome. I'd prefer your articles typed with a small margin. Make sure the ink is as dark as possible so the text will photocopy clearly. Hand-written articles are also welcome! So are drawings and cartoons, whatever you can do.

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FINALLY . . .

Thank you for seeking out this magazine and for taking the time to read it.

Yours,



Christopher.

ADVENTURE CODER

ISSUE 17

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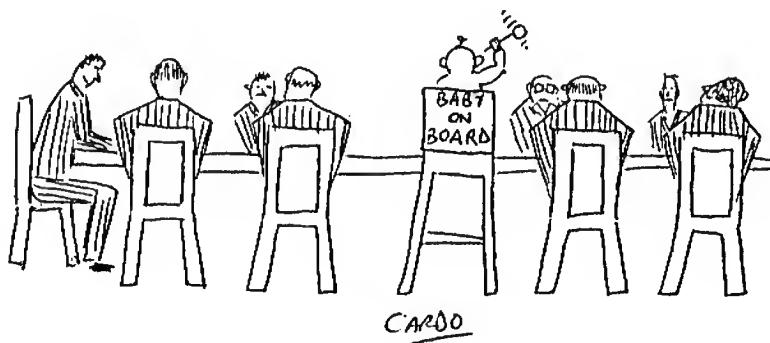
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Look out for Issue 18 of 'Adventure Coder' in April! (I have to do 'Adventure Workshop' Issue 3 next!)



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first issue in 1992 of 'Adventure Coder'! I hope it's up to the same high standards set by the previous ones, and with any luck even better! At the end of last year, it looked as though 'Coder' was well and truly finished; there were very few articles coming in, just not enough to fill even one issue, and it seemed as though everyone had given up writing in! But then I got a letter from Stephen Groves, who has single-handedly saved 'Coder' from stopping. How? By sending me a 24-page article, that's how! At first I thought that was great, and asked him to edit it into smaller chunks that would fit into the magazine. The article is Stephen's account of how to program your own adventure writer. So? Well at first the 24 pages seemed a lot, until Stephen informed me that it was a fraction of the total text he was intending to write! If I could carry on for a few more issues, he'd be willing to complete further parts of his article, which alone could guarantee future issues of 'Coder' - for at least a year! If not two! Having seen the first few parts of Stephen's article, I can assure you it covers the matter of writing your own adventure creator with maximum depth! You might like to borrow parts of it for your own program, or you can simply follow each issue's installments with joy as Stephen peels away the mystery behind writing a truly useful utility! We're talking about one that allows many great features here, and Stephen explains exactly how it all works as he lists the entire program in relevant chunks. It's unmissable! Although the routines are in Spectrum machine code, there's no reason why they can't easily be adapted for the Amstrad as well, or converted to the Commodore 64 if you're skilled enough. I must take this opportunity to thank Stephen immensely for his article, which must have taken him years to program and write out! I'm happy to say that the first part of his article is in this issue, but don't worry, the other parts aren't always that long! Without Steve's help, you wouldn't have seen this issue, or the next, for sure!

Also this issue I received a brand new cassette-based magazine from Doctor Dark, at least that's what he calls himself! I sent this to my trusty slave, er, I mean reviewer, George March. He was so impressed, he gave me back a big review of what appears to be a major new magazine in the adventure world. See what the fuss is all about in George's review on pages 10-13!

The rest of the issue is a bit of a mix, but what do you expect with a severe lack of other articles to use? Where are your listings, everyone? I need routines listed for ADLAN, PAW, GAC, or whatever program you use. I also need general articles on the state of the adventure scene today - that's if it still exists judging by the empty mail box! And don't forget your letters, telling me what you think about 'Coder', or anything else for that matter. I must congratulate Harold Dixon for his superb letter, covering all aspects of the adventure world at length. Why don't I get more letters like his?

Back to the man who's saved 'Coder' from extinction - Stephen Groves has also sent in something that might make the next issue so special, you'd be crazy to miss it! I can't go into details as yet, for negotiations are still going on, but just wait and see!!

Further congratulations are in order to Ian Eveleigh, a regular reader and contributer to 'Coder'. In last year's 'Adventure Probe' Convention awards, Ian was one of the names listed for the prestigious 'MOST PROMISING AUTHOR' award. This was for his Zenobi adventure 'Sherlock Holmes The Lamberley Mystery'. I'm proud to announce news on Ian's next adventure, 'Jack Casey'. Having seen the intro to this, and judging by the quality of his first game, I think we're in for a treat!

You may be wondering over the cover this month. To me, it represents a conflict between the man and the woman within their marriage, caused by

the dreaded computer! On the left, the fashion conscious woman, showing no interest whatsoever in her husband's computer, who is shown on the right, gripped by his machine. I don't think this is at all typical - there are many marriages where the couple share an interest in computers, and especially adventure games, and of course there's the opposite scene, where the wife is the only one keen on computing! I show this view because that's what the pictures suggested to me when I cut them out of a magazine! (I just hope my French readers don't recognize them!) I've got dozens and dozens of similar photographic cuttings, but I never seem to be able to use them up. This time, I knew I wanted to put those two pictures together, and I knew I wanted the tear down the middle, and to me it just suggested a strained marriage. Make of it yourselves what you will! Yet think for a moment about the role of the computer in the home - do you find it works for or against the family? Do you find computing (and adventure programming) social or anti-social? Maybe you've never thought about it before. Myself, I've found that on the one hand the computer keeps me locked away on my own in the bedroom, which I don't mind personally, but on the other hand, I've made friends with countless people who share a common interest in computers! Without programming and adventures, without 'Adventure Coder', I'd never have become friends with these people at all! Now I enjoy regular correspondence with several readers from the UK to Denmark! One of my readers has really become a great friend now, and we discuss everything under the sun, yet it was all down to him putting a 'P.S.' about keeping up the musical plugs in 'Coder'! And yet if I hadn't plugged my favourite bands in the first place, we'd never have hit off so well! So for me, computers are definitely NOT anti-social! I'd be interested to hear other readers' opinions and experiences on this. Until next issue...



CA Hester (Editor)



75p OFF 'COMPUTER ADVENTURES - THE SECRET ART'!

This coupon enables you to claim 75p off the bestselling Amazon Systems book by GIL WILLIAMSON, 'Computer Adventures - The Secret Art', priced fully at £4.95. To use this coupon, simply send it to the address below along with a cheque, postal order, Access or Visa, for £4.20 - that's a 75p saving! But hurry - the offer closes on the 29th of February 1992. See the advert on the back of this issue for further details on the book.

AMAZON SYSTEMS,
MERLEWOOD,
LODGE HILL ROAD,
FARNHAM,
SURREY,
GU10 3RD, UK.

'BARE-BONES SOLUTIONS'

An adventure solutions booklet by Les Mitchell. Reviewed by MC Chester.

Yo! If you're stuck in the latest mega-game adventure, or stuck in the latest budget cheapie, then don't fret, get 'Bare-Bones Solutions' - it's real! Lemme explain... dis is the first of a new series of booklets, though they're the same size n' style as 'Adventure Coder' is!, which Les Mitchell is hoping to produce on a regular basis, firstly for the Spectrum and maybe for your other computers too! But that depends on response. Les told me the booklets will eventually build up to an A-to-Z 'Adventure Reference Library' - yo! Sounds well mega to me mate!

So if you're a master at adventuring but you're still in need of a solution to the game you're playing, or if you did complete the game, but (oops) you forgot to write down the solution, Les thinks 'Bare-Bones' (oo-er!) is the thing for you!

Inside, there's the full solutions to the following games - check these! 'Aftershock', 'Alien Research Centre', 'Arrow Of Death One', 'Arrow Of Death Two', 'Castle Adventure', 'Castle Eerie', 'Colditz', 'Desert Island Adventure', 'Hit', 'Indus Valley', 'Shadows Of The Past', 'Starwreck', 'Ten Little Indians' and 'Wizard Of Akyrz' (who makes these names up!). That's 14 games in there! And at £1.50, it looks to me like 'Bare-Bones' is pretty mega value, or what? Imagine the cost of postage stamps and envelopes and time if you were to send off for each of those games on their own, know what I'm sayin'?

The solutions are listed in capitals, in a simple list of the commands needed to complete the game from start to finish. Les has also added some of his own comments here and there, so you know what's supposed to be happening! But why include the congratulations messages you get at the end of the game in your booklet, Les? Surely it spoils the fun of getting there and reading the same text, you know what I'm sayin'?

Well, if ya interested in getting your grubby mitts on a copy of 'Bare-Bones', you need to send £1.50 to this address:-

BARE-BONES PRODUCTIONS,
10 TAVISTOCK STREET,
NEWLAND AVENUE,
HULL,
HU5 2LJ.

Yeeahhhh!!! Get your copy soon! I'm outta here. See y'all! (Let's hope not... - *only joking, Mike! - Ed*)

Writers

Write to...

Chris,
3 West Lane,
Baildon,
West Yorkshire,
BD17 5HD, UK.

DON'T GIVE IN!
from Harold Dixon, Caine.

You seem to have quite a nice little magazine together here, it's a pity more people don't write in to you - never mind, but don't give in! Have you tried advertising your magazine in your local computer shop? A poster done up on the computer together with some cartoon illustration and where to get hold of it may just stimulate that bit of interest. I did not know about your publication until I read about it in 'Adventure Probe'. It strikes me that if more people knew about it, that would solve your problem of shortage of material. Perhaps a few copies could be left at the computer shop in hope of sale - who knows?

If you would care to run up a poster I would be pleased to get our local computer shop to advertise it for you? The shop is very well stocked, and is, I think the best computer games shop for miles around. The shopkeeper is interested in all modes of software and says many people call in asking for adventure games specially for the C64 which seem in short supply. He welcomes my attempt at writing one, and am sure he would jump at the chance of any idea that would promote this market.

I recently purchased a second hand C128 purely as a backup for my ageing C64. It would be very interesting if I could use the full capacities of this machine within the structure of GAC or another suchlike utility. Just think of the adventure that could be produced with that combination? I know the

C128 did not really get off the ground - but surely there are a few knocking about out there - ready to be used, maybe someone knows of a suitable utility? After all it really is a good computer - seems a pity to waste all that good memory space! GAC+ can be used on it I know, but only in C64 mode.

Writing adventure games is such a fascinating way of escaping this morbid world and entering a world of your own - I wonder I didn't try it earlier! Trouble is - it is so time-consuming, an hour is like a minute! Often the wife shouts down - take the dog out, tea's ready, when are you coming to bed, or it's time to go to work! I have to be very careful not to get into rows over spending too much time on it (the wife hates computers). There really aren't enough hours in the day to cope with it, but I try.

I have been working on my first adventure now for many months, and find it quite intriguing - the ideas flow easily enough, I just hope that they are good enough to meet the challenge of the master adventurers in this world. I am slowly approaching the finishing stages now and hope to present my ideas to suitable playtesters in the near future.

I get many ideas whilst at work, and often jot them down when I get the chance - if I don't jot it down right away the idea is lost. I often think up new ideas when working on it, and often end up re-writing sections - I dare say the final result is much different to what I started with.

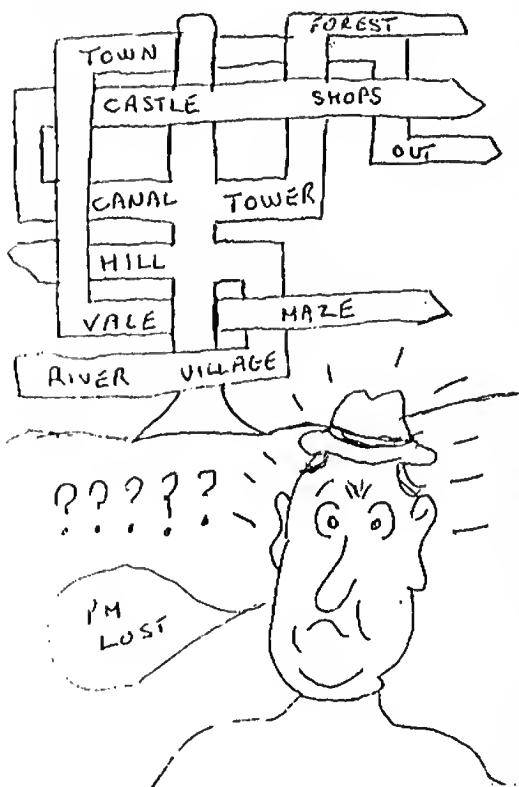
I like to write notes, modify them and get them on the computer at the earliest convenience - I alternate between notes and actual computing - I create situations as I go on. I often trip myself up - so to speak whilst computing, getting myself into impossible situations, so goodness knows what the final result will be - hopefully it will all be worthwhile in the end! I do my own playtesting to a certain extent as I go on, and it seems practical to me - let's see what others think!

I already have a main theme written down for my next adventure! Ideas I'm not short of - it's just finding the time to get them on the computer - trouble is I have too many other interests, but I must

admit I enjoy doing it, and adventuring is my favourite hobby. I find ordinary computer language hard to grasp though - thank goodness for GAC+!

I gather short stories are in order, so I submit one which I wrote some years ago (another hobby) it won a prize in a contest. I hope you find it suitable for your magazine, it is a sort of suspense story, and is called 'Alice'. (This will appear in the next issue! - Ed)

Cartoons, I'm not too good at, although I did have one published in 'Adventure Probe' the other month. Here is one that I hope will raise a few laughs.



I sympathize with your views on the environment, charities and etc - I contribute regularly to Oxfam, not a great amount, but as you say every little helps. Maybe it would be a good idea to set up a competition of sorts with a small entry fee and say a small prize - maybe a free subscription to your magazine or to

'Probe' with the profit going to charity. Maybe an adventure-writing contest - why not have a word with 'Probe's editor Mandy and get something going? I would be pleased to give you any help I am able to supply. Perhaps even a Cartoon Drawing Contest may be in order, or even Short Story Writing - the possibilities are endless, and the results could fill your magazine (and 'Probe') for many issues to come - worth a thought eh? Even if you think the idea not practical for making money for charity maybe it could be used to stimulate magazine growth and interest in these subjects.

I wish you most success with the magazine and will send in any further ideas that occur to me.

(Ed - Many thanks for your superb letter, Harold! As for competitions, the last one I did was simply to write in a letter! Yet not one reader entered, so why bother with any more competitions?

I look forward to your adventure, what's it called? As for the C128, almost every company chose to ignore this potentially huge machine. Surely a version of GAC was possible that simply used the extra memory?

Your offer to advertise "Coder" via your local computer shop sounds too good to be true. If I get the time, I'll try and do a poster for you, and send you some copies of my magazine to give the shopkeeper - he seems to be a fine man! Once again, thanks for your letter - let's have more like Harold's in please!)

SAM IS FAR BETTER
from Phil Glover, 43 Ferndale Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, B29 9AU, UK.

I received a letter recently from John Marshall, who heard about the Sam Adventure Club from you. Thanks for doing so. We're slowly but surely getting the club running with a few members, and our disk magazine is progressing well. If you have access to a Sam, let me know and I'll send you a disk.

As you probably know, there seems to be little chance of Gilsoft converting PWN to Sam format, so any adventures may need to be written in BASIC. Spectrum BASIC adventures were rarely very impressive, but Sam BASIC is one of the most powerful of

any home computer. We now have MasterBASIC for Sam, which is superb for keen programmers, and it seems that several people are trying to write adventures using this, and possibly two adventure writing utilities.

If we can publish some articles about writing adventures in BASIC, we'll suggest that the authors may also like to write an article or two for 'Adventure Coder', as I'm sure some other computer owners would be interested.

Sam has a long way to go before it can be classed as a popular computer, as it has little financial backing and most of the press is 16-bit orientated nowadays. However, it is superbly designed and expandable, and may gain in popularity. 48K Spectrum games can easily run on it, and a 12BK emulator is now being developed, so we may be able to transfer our 12BK adventures to Sam disk. I hardly use my Spectrum 12BK now, as Sam is far better. (My set-up consists of a 512K Sam with two 3.5" drives, stereo amp, mouse, Sambus motherboard and printer, with cassette and two joysticks plugged in. All these add-ons are connected at the same time, as Sam bristles with ports and sockets on its rear edge, and no Spectrum-wobble problems!)

SOMETHING MISSING from Alison York

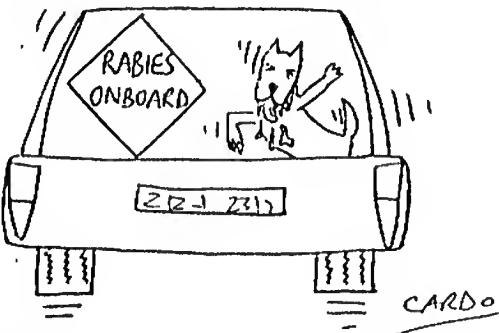
Although I enjoyed the last issue (16) of 'Adventure Coder', I couldn't help but notice one omission - where was George March's 'PAW Prints'? It was always the best part of the mag for me. I was honoured when George helped me out a while ago, in his 'PAW Marks' column - where was that too? - with a problem I had. He's a good man! I hope he hasn't finished his excellent PAW articles - let's have another one George!

(Ed - George finished with PAW? That'll be the day - he must know it inside out by now! As far as I know, he hasn't finished with 'PAW Prints', but I know he's been busy using STAC on his new ST (oops!) and of course, writing his 'Head's Cases' series. Maybe George could send in a reply to Alison himself?)

L I N E A D S

SPECTRUM ADVENTURES! 'Magnetic Moon', 'Sinbad And The Golden Ship', 'Volcanic Dungeon', 'Journey's End', 'Gnome Ranger', 'Book Of The Dead', 'The Big Sleaze', 'Lprds Of Midnight', 'Doomdark's Revenge'. Write for details (none given here) - Ed to: GEORGE MARCH, 8 HEATHERSLAW ROAD, FENHAM, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NES 20J, UK.

COMMODORE 64 ADVENTURES! 'Lord Of The Rings', 'Quest For The Golden Eggcup', 'Se-Kaa Of Assiah', 'Kentilla', 'Treasure Island', 'Souls Of Darkon', 'The Very Big Cave Adventure', 'The Doggit', 'The Colour Of Magic', 'The Worm In Paradise', 'The Snow Queen', 'Spiderman', 'Winter Wonderland', 'GAC', 'The Ket Trilogy', 'Macbeth The Adventure'. Write for details to: GEORGE MARCH, 8 HEATHERSLAW ROAD, FENHAM, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NES 20J.



THE CHROME BICYCLE

by DJ Melody

Julia smiled at the sight of the chrome bicycle peeping out from the gaps in the wrapping. Six years later, she would ride the same bicycle to meet her boyfriend. Six years after that, she'd be married with a baby boy, whilst the bike resided in the dust of the garage. Six years on from that, her young son would discover the bike amongst forgotten debris, and ask,

"Mummy, where did this come from?" She would tell him, in a flood of nostalgia.

ADVENTURE LINK REVIEW by George March

Some days (or weeks?) Depending on how long it takes for this piece to get into 'Coder'!! ago, Chris sent me a quite unusual tape-based magazine to review called 'Adventure Link', for the Spectrum (which works on both 48K and 128K machines, I've tried both!). You see this magazine has a real 'Adventure game' feel to it. It isn't just something like a tape-based version of 'Your Sinclair' (or whatever?), it actually looks and feels just like a text adventure. For example on the first page of the first 'load' of this cassette it has... (And this is exactly how it looks on-screen!)

DIRECTIONS...

NORTH = Reviews

WEST = Wanted

EAST = Best Of The Best

WHERE TO NOW?

[]

So, as the 'magazine' looked like it wanted to be a game, I played it like one!

I found that trying any major instructions (or any other directions apart from N, S, E or W) such as Inventory, Help or Examine, etc, simply gets the message 'GET EXPLORING' printed, and trying to go in a direction which isn't given as being available gets the message 'BLOCKED...' printed instead.

Now before I start off into the review itself, the only 3 'very slight' problems I could find through all 5 (count 'em, FIVE!! 'loads' in all! Big surprise number 1!) loads were...

- 1) The awful font the 'magazine' is written in (well, I didn't like it, but some people might!), it's totally written in CAPITAL letters!
- 2) When I was on the first page I found that if the text scrolls off the top of the screen, then you lose the directions available list (at the top of the screen) and CANNOT return to that screen again, as 'LOOK' only gets the 'GET EXPLORING' message printed. So there's no way of telling what's what? (But I suppose you could just guess, I had to!)
- 3) The last nagging thing about 'Adventure Link' was the odd spelling mistake here and there, but these are minuscule problemettes (ie, minor, minor-problems), and this is the very first issue of 'Link', so I was happy to overlook the odd spelling glitch! I mean, I make plenty!

Well, to begin with, from the first page, I went NORTH to the REVIEWS section. (Big surprise no.2 coming!)

These reviews are done in what I could call a methodical way, reviewing not ONLY the structure, playability and look, etc, of a game, but also the way they're packaged, and what kind of instructions, inlay cards, etc, come with it...

Game reviewing includes listing any game's...

FRIENDLINESS (User friendliness?)

HOSPITALITY (?)

GOOD POINTS

BAD POINTS

MEMORY SIZE (ie, is a game for the 48K and 128K Spectrums, or will the game only fit a 128K machine?)

SYSTEM ANALYSIS (ie, which utility was used to write the reviewed game with? By the way, PAW was used to very good advantage to write this tape-based 'magazine' itself!)

POCKET VALUE (ie, the cost of the reviewed game, is it value-for-money?)

COMMENTS (The reviewer's personal judgements.)

OVERALL (How much out of 100% is the reviewed game worth?)

CONTACT (The address to buy the reviewed game from)

These reviews also list STORYLINE, written examples of SCREENSHOTS (though not the actual pictures themselves, unfortunately! For legal reasons, I guess?), LOADING SCREENS, etc.

Each review (of a game) then goes on to allow the reader (or should it be player?) of a review to be taken (guided?) through part of each review. A free sample of each reviewed game, more or less! Though an unplayable sample of course!

There's only 2 games reviewed in this first issue of 'Adventure Link', but it is the first issue, after all, so we've got to give it a chance!

First game reviewed was Mike Gerrard's 'One Of Our Wombats Is Missing' from John (Balrog) Wilson's Zenobi Software, and second through the ringer was 'The Sabat Of Milton Gordon', and highly rung-out it was! What a hammering it got, but as I always try and point out, just because the reviewer doesn't care for a game (myself included!) does NOT mean to say that other people might not like it! You pays ya' money, ya' takes ya' choice! By the way 'The Sabat' above was released through the 'Spectrum Adventure Club', but 'Adventure Link' doesn't say who wrote it?

Next I went WEST to the WANTED section...

This tape 'magazine' also does a Spectrum-based Public Domain (PD) games service, and so this 'games wanted' section is a service allowing any program (not just games, but demos, utilities, etc) writer to distribute their 'talents' to a wider audience. This is also a service for buying PD software from 'Adventure Link' of course!

Lastly I went EAST to BEST OF THE BEST...

Which lists the reviewer's favourite game of the month, which for this first issue is 'The Micro Mutant'. Now when I read the review for 'Micro Mutant' (from Compass Software) I thought this guy's a mixture between Richard Matheson's book/film 'The Incredible Shrinking Man', the 'Honey I Shrunk The Kids' film and a Marvel Comics character called 'Ant Man' (for the uninformed, the 'Ant Man' is a character who can shrink or grow in size with a special gas, and communicates with insects by electronic means!), all very much like the character in 'Micro Mutant'.

Now I haven't actually seen this 'Micro Mutant' game in action, let alone played it, but it does sound like something I'd like to get my grubby little hands on!

This 'Micro Mutant' (*that's enough plugs! - Ed*) review also lists a 'game within a game' feature that 'Micro' contains, and as 'Micro' was written using PAW then this 'game within a game' idea was probably achieved using the EXTERN command, I think?

The second 'load' on this 'Adventure Link' cassette, for issue 1, is only the 2nd of 5, as I said, 'Load's. For the measily price of 1 pound 50

pence! (Big surprise No.3!) Now on the first page of this 2nd 'load' on side 1, it has...

NORTH = Transtipations (Pardon?)
WEST = Hack Attack
EAST = Solutions

So, I went NORTH to TRANSTIPATIONS (or clues section, help and hints if you prefer), including hints for 'Micro Mutant', 'Crack City', 'Spiderman', 'The Hobbit', 'Bugsy', 'Rebel Planet', 'Warlord' and 'Red Moon'.

I then went WEST to HACK ATTACK, which gives a BASIC listing for 'Lords Of Midnight'. (Eh? - Ed) Now I know there was only 1 listing in the first issue's 'Hack Attack', but just like 'Adventure Coder' and 'Workshop' the reviewer(s?) for 'Adventure Link' are going to need people like you to help with reviews, suggestions, BASIC and Machine Code listings, etc, etc...

And lastly for the 2nd load, I went EAST to the SOLUTIONS section, giving complete solutions for 'The Sorcerer Of Claymorgue Castle', 'Pharaoh's Tomb' and the 'Case Of The Be-headed Smuggler'.

So, onto the 3rd 'load' of side 1, composed of...

NORTH = Doctor Doctor (Does anybody remember UFO?)
WEST = Fanzine Front
EAST = In The Pipeline

I went NORTH to DOCTOR DOCTOR which is a problems answered section (in much the same vein as 'Adventure Probe').

WEST led to FANZINE FRONT, a review section of adventure fan-magazines, for example, 'Adventure Probe', 'Adventure Coder', and 'Adventure Workshop'. This first issue of 'Adventure Link' gives a review of our very own 'Coder', listing its contents by...

NAME OF FANZINE	
ISSUE NUMBER	(ie, the latest issue number)
PRICE	
PAGE SIZE	(ie, the size of the actual pages making up the reviewed magazine. In the case of 'Coder' it's A5)
EDITOR	(Editor's name)
PAGES	(How many pages are there to the average issue?)
CONTENTS	(Which gives the contents of the latest issue of the reviewed magazine. In this case issue 15 of 'Coder'. Which lists the Mike Gerrard interview, a review of my own 'PAW Prints', Colin Campbell's 'My Experiences With Adventures' column, a review of John Packham's 'ADLAN Adventuring' column, etc)

Back to the review of 'Adventure Link'. From the first page of 'load' 3, still on the first side of this cassette, EAST leads to the IN THE PIPELINE section, which lists 4 new games coming out from Zenobi Software, and the sequel to Compass Software's 'Blood Of Bognole' (or is it 'Boghole'?)

Now for 'load' no.4, the first 'load' on side 2, we have...

NORTH = A word of warning
SOUTH = Competitions
EAST = Practical Problems
WEST = Letters

So, first I went NORTH to A WORD OF WARNING, giving exactly the same type

of questions as to why 'Coder' and 'Workshop' might eventually die-off - NOBODY'S WRITING IN!!

I then went SOUTH to COMPETITIONS, which is of course... A competitions section (!!).

EAST led to PRACTICAL PROGRAMMING, giving BASIC listings for utilities, game add-ons, pokes, and hopefully in the future EXTERN programs to use!

WEST was the LETTERS page section, unfortunately this piece was empty as yet, well it is the very first issue!

The 5th and last 'load', the 2nd on side 2, was made up of...

NORTH = Future Features

SOUTH = Improvements

EAST = Next Month

WEST = Subscriptions

NORTH led to FUTURE FEATURES, which tells the reader about anything coming up in the future...

SOUTH's IMPROVEMENTS section asks the readers for suggestions of any improvements they can make for the betterment of 'Adventure Link' itself.

EAST took me to the NEXT MONTH section, listing the reviews and whatever 'Adventure Link' are coming up with in the next issue, including reviews of 'One Man War', 'Crack City', 'Lamberley Mystery', 'The Blood Of Bognole' (or 'Boghole', or whatever!), 'The Darkest Road', 'Deep Waters - Vol.1' (Isn't she related to Muddy, Roger and Crystal? - Ed), 'Des & Gertrude' (?) and 'Treasure Island'.

How come I've only heard of 2 of the above?

Now, lastly, WEST led me to the SUBSCRIPTIONS section. Now here, if you choose a full 12-issue subscription then you're allowed to choose a free game (there's a good choice of freebies, as well!) to go with your subscription, or if you choose an 18-issue subscription, then you're allowed to choose 3 free games from a bigger selection!

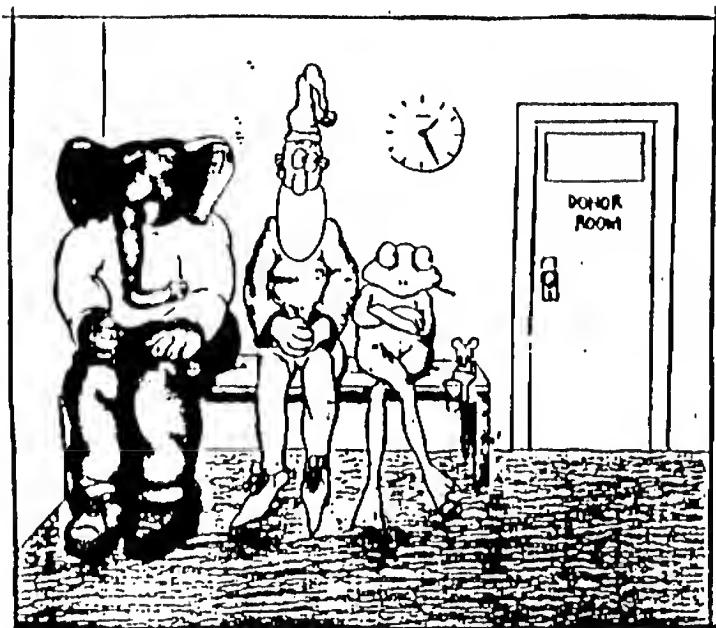
Now, even after the 5th and last 'load' on side 2 there are a number of really quite decent 'loaders' with loading screens, for the Spectrum, for you to use! (Big surprise No.4!) I particularly liked the FIRE PRINT 'loader'. The 3 'loaders' on this first issue are 'DATA ZAP', 'FIRE PRINT' and 'MULTIFLASH'.

Now, as a final overall (totally unbiased) view I really was quite surprised and impressed with this double-sided, 8-'load' (if you count the 'loaders' at the end!) compilation tape-magazine of news, views, reviews and help, etc, etc, (you get the idea, there's plenty in it!) and considering that there's more adventure stuff in this first issue than you'll find in a whole year's worth of 'Your Sinclair', and it costs less than a single issue of YS (and then there's the free loaders!) I don't think there's much to complain about! So why not give it a go? It's available from...

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FAVES OF THE YEAR

1991 was the year Bryan Adams reached No.1 - and stayed there for 16 weeks!! (Easily beating Slim Whitman's 11 weeks in 1955.) We also lost several star names, and ones less known. We lost Eric Clapton's son, and also nearly lost Eric Clapton, who'd have been killed if he'd have taken the same plane as guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan. We also lost several jazz stars - Slim Galliard, Stan Getz, Miles Davis and others. And a singer by the name of Frederick Bulsara, who changed his name to Larry Lurex, then to Freddie Mercury. Rock will never be the same again...

We had hit albums by a series of major acts last year, most of them just in time for Christmas! Acts such as Dire Straits, Genesis, Michael Jackson and U2, who battled it out for the top, though with debatable levels of quality. But it was the year that R.E.M and Public Enemy proved beyond doubt they were the hottest acts - I'd hated them both before, but this year I was firmly converted! And brand new acts such as Seal came along, though I wish they'd stop remixing his songs - there's seven mixes of 'Killer' alone!

The year's most controversial event though wasn't a film, or a Rolling Stones' song, but a rap album. N.W.A's 'Efil4zaggin' was put out, then seized by the Obscene Publications Squad, who thought it highly offensive! Whilst in America, it reached No.1, over here it was banned, until in court, the case was dismissed, leaving Island Records with a clear victory for freedom of speech.

1991 was also the year LP sales became so poor that many stores, such as WHSMITHS and Woolworths began to sell off their vinyl albums and clear their shelves, so if you haven't switched to tape or compact disc yet, be warned! Yet new formats such as Philip's DCC and Sony's Mini-Discs were already on the horizon. Alas both are now said to be 'near-CD' quality, so we can forget those!

On the home front, it was the year my brother finally proposed to his long-standing girlfriend. Now she's his wife! They were lucky to find a fantastic house as well, and I wish them both a happy marriage!

Now read on to see what my personal favourites of 1991 were. If you disagree, why not send in your own?

Favourite Albums

1. YES 'Union'. Sheer rock genius from this Sixties' band, still going strong due to so many great lineups!

2. JON & VANGELIS 'Page Of Life'. That's JON Anderson from Yes, with an album he recorded with Greek maestro Vangelis way back in 1989, but it's taken this long to release it! And how the wait was worth it!! Romantic, powerful music that's brimming with sheer QUALITY - not to be missed!

3. R.E.M. 'Out Of Time'. Oozing with classic melodies, it just couldn't be ignored! Original as well, despite Beatles and Simon & Garfunkel references. Simply brilliant!

4. MARILLION 'Holidays In Eden'. Aylesbury's band, back with a set of stunning ballads and rock pieces, evocatively sung by Steve Hogarth on top form - he's the guy who replaced Fish! A gem.

5. PUBLIC ENEMY 'Apocalypse '91: The Enemy Strikes Black'. I'd hated them until I sat down and listened to one of their albums. Then this one was released, and hey! It's fantastic!! A powerful fusion of rhythms, sound effects, samples, hard hitting rap, humour, seriousness, politics, social issues, all woven into a magical tapestry of noise. One to play loud!

6. U2 'Achtung Baby'. You can dismiss them as pop, you can ignore them as superstars, but you can't dismiss their music. Rewriting their own

style, U2 gave us yet another great album. With unusual production reminiscent of King Crimson's '21st Century Schizoid Man', and maybe The Doors, I couldn't fail to like it. Haunting tunes, fascinating lyrics and grabbing instrumentation, it was an album to study for years to come.

7. ROXETTE 'Joyride'. Sweden's most famous band since Abba returned with their second album, packed with loveable melodies and catchy production. Sheer pop, but with tracks like the acoustic 'Watercolours In The Rain' they proved they could employ other styles just as well. The only problem proved which tracks to release as singles! Consistent and cheerful, an album to be warmed by.

8. PROFESSOR GRIFF 'KAO'S II WIZ *7* DOME' (pronounced 'Chaos To Wisdom'!). Ex-Public Enemy, Griff put out this fabulous collection of intelligent and lively tracks, showing rap was far from dumb. As is usual with rap albums, the tracks are joined together with superb interludes, made-up scenes that make a point, and always keep you entertained. Get the CD for the extra tracks!

9. RUSH 'Roll The Bones'. From the most consistent rock band in the world came another fine album, but just too fine this time to really move you. Parts of it are dull, though it's always well-played, well-worded and astute.

10. SEAL 'Seal'. With production by ex-Yes singer Trevor Horn (that's TRUE!) and a set of great tunes, 'Seal' made a damn fine debut album, complete with Trevor Rabin of Yes as one of the guitarists. (But he's impossible to spot!) Impressive stuff, once you get to know it.

Other goodies came fresh from T'Pau, Genesis, Prince, Erasure, Fish, PM Dawn, De La Soul, Ice Cube, ex-Bangles' singer Susanna Hoffs, Queen, and Guns N' Roses, who finally released a third album... and a fourth as well, under the guise of the two 'Use Your Illusion' records. I'm off to buy them both soon!

Favourite Singles

1. U2 'The Fly'. Not for the average song or the above-average drums, vocals and bass guitar, but for the totally amazing GUITAR! If you listen to this on headphones, you can literally blow your mind! Yet it's not a riot of endless screaming noise, indeed the guitar STOPS at the start! Instead, it's U2's finest moment - sheer irresistible rock 'n' roll, like you thought had disappeared. 'The Fly' cut through the synthesized charts with ease, straight in to No.1, and straight through your soul! Not a sampler or a drum-machine in sight!

2. MARILLION 'No One Can'. Here, we had a minor hit record, but one that grabbed your heart and wouldn't let go. Described by one fan as "a perfect record", it was simple, romantic and a joy.

3. QUEEN 'Innuendo'. Another hit to enter at No.1, it was even longer than 'Bohemian Rhapsody', and almost as good! The Spanish guitar, from another Yes maestro Steve Howe, was the icing on the cake. Magic!

4. MARILLION 'Dry Land'. Another minor hit, and a classic! A really beautiful chorus; and a smashing song, actually written by Steve Hogarth's old band, before he joined Marillion!

5. QUEENSRYCHE 'Silent Lucidity'. A total clone of Pink Floyd's 'The Wall', complete with strings by Michael Kamen who worked on 'The Wall' himself! Yet a magical track, from the acoustic intro to the Rush-like rock. I thought Queensryche were thrash-metal, but their album 'Empire' is stunning progressive rock!

6. ERASER 'Chorus'. Pure pop, a mixture of electronic doodling and fantastic tunes, their best yet!

7. R.E.M. 'Shiny Happy People'. Like Erasure, you just couldn't resist this one - the strings and vocals from Kate Pierson of the B-52s made this even better. Dangerously commerical for R.E.M. though!

8. QUEENSRYCHE 'Best I Can'. An adrenalin stirring slice of magic. The full-length album version is a masterpiece!

9. SEAL 'Crazy'. It couldn't be disliked, a blend of blatant disco rhythms with rousing vocals and that magical Trevor Horn production stamp.

10. ELECTRONIC 'Get The Message'. Classic pop with Johnny Marr proving he was the real force behind The Smiths, and Bernard Sumner of New Order adding great vocals. I might have put their album in my other list, but I never heard it!

11. EXTREME 'Get The Funk Out'. Sounding as though they were singing something else in the chorus (!), Extreme broke through in '91 with this riotous example of their heavy style. Great fun!

12. POP WILL EAT ITSELF 'X Y & Zee'. Their album's rubbish, but this single was a rare breed - a remix that shines over the original! With oodles of ace lyrics, it was a real fun tune!

Other gems came forth from the talents of Enya, Right Said Fred, Extreme again, Yes, R.E.M., Prince, Oleta Adams, the Rebel MC, PM Dawn, Guns N' Roses, Kate Bush, Marillion again, De La Soul (with a SERIOUS Christmas song!), Susanna Hoffs, Salt N' Pepa, Queensryche, The KLF (with Tammy Wynette!!), Queen again, DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince, C+C Music Factory, Altern 8 and Cubic 22 all providing much diverse entertainment. Now for the failures...

Worst Single: HAMMER 'Too Legit 2 Quit'. Completely inept. Soccer fans are more musical than this racket! However, I really liked his next single, 'Addams Groove'! So he was saved from the next award...

Worst Act: WET WET WET. A fun pop band who turned into a 'serious' soul outfit, desperately trying to prove themselves. They even grew their hair long in a bid to be taken seriously. What a joke!

Most Disappointing Album: GENESIS 'We Can't Dance'. After years of outstanding material, they finally gave in to the drumsound, production, vocals and songwriting of Phil Collins. This was more like a new solo album! Tony Banks was virtually inaudible.

Bring 'Em Back!: Jimi Hendrix, The Doors, Freddie Mercury, Blondie, ABBA, Roxy Music, Cream, Haircut 100, Soft Cell, John Lennon, and all other great musicians who've left the Earth.

Send 'Em Away!: The Farm, Dire Straits, Hammer, Vanilla Ice, most remixers, Zoë...

Things To Look Forward To: GENESIS - a possible compilation of all their B-sides and rarities, from when they used to be great; PINK FLOYD - their new album (?) and tour; YES - their new album and tour too; FISH - a possible LIVE album; ROGER WATERS 'Amused To Death' (If it's half as stunning as his last album!); PUBLIC ENEMY & ANTHRAX - a whole joint album (and solo albums!); R.E.M. - their next album, already half-recorded (or finished??!).

HEAD'S CASES 4 "DA CASE A DA BAR-STOOL PIGEON"

It wuz' 5 ta' 6 on a Tuesda' afta'noon in Octoba', I wuz' supposed ta' meet Wendy at Shirley's Bar at 7, bud' as usual I nivva' gits' 'dat far, 'dere wuzza' quick rap at 'da door - it wuz' only a few seconds ah' M. C. Hammer, bud' it got ma' attention!

By 'da huge, padded shoulders an' floppy Fedora silhouetted 'gainst 'da glass inna' door, I recognised 'da shape alright, a swindler an' hard street thug - she wuzza' big girl wuz' Kerry! I kinda' reckoned 'er an' 'da boys 'ad come fa' 'da money - bud' I wuzn't worried, I 'ad a switch-blade taped ta' ma' ankle an' a .45 in 'da top drawer - jeez' some days ya' jus' can't git' ridda' 'deez damn debt collectors! So I wrote 'er a Latex cheque quick, an' headed out ta' 'da bus..

Hell! - Ya' can't even cross 'da street properly in Greenwich Village anymore 'deez days, wid' out some damn fool gettin' in trouble - ma' ol' pal, Paddy Goldberg Enrami (a Pakastani Jew frum' old Ireland), wuz' lyin' in 'da gutter jus' outside 'da office, so I wanders ova' to 'im..

"Hay, Paddy! Ya' want me ta' call ya' a doctor or sumt'in'?" I sez' grinnin' at 'im.

"Arr, t'anks thur', Ritchie, ould son, oi h'appreciates that, oi does!"

"Ok, Pads, yu'r a doctor!"

"An' yu'r a complete an' utter bar-steward, thur', Ritchie! Does it properly oi sez'!"

A couple ah' minutes later 'da docs arrived, an' I sees 'da h'ambulance takin' Paddy away, so I jumps in 'da back as it drives off!

"So!" I sez' ta' Paddy "Whut's wrong 'dis time?"

"Aaargh, oi'm aalright, oi ounly took a couple ah' hundred asprin fa' the heed ache las' noight!"

"I think he means t'night?" sez' 'da medic.

"Naa', Tuesda'! Aye, las' noight oi sez'!"

"Look, Buddy!" sez' 'da h'ambulance guy "T'day's Widinsday', if ya' took 'em all on Toozday, you'd be dead by now!"

"Ah, well 'den!" sez' Paddy "Oi must ah' tooken 'em on Monda' 'den!"

"Urgh, yeah, ok!" I sez' ta' Paddy, I wuzn't gonna' argue, I mean 'dis goof wuz' so stoopid 'ey even kept an empty bottle ah' milk in 'is fridge fa' people 'dat 'ad black coffee! An' I remember when Paddy foist came over frum' Ireland in '77, an' 'da day we went ta' 'dat pizza place - still makes me feel lousy, when 'da guy at 'da counter sez' "Ok, mak, ya' wan' it cut in 4 slices or 6?" an' Paddy sez' "Arr, no, laddy, yuz' got it wrong, the name's Paddy, not Mack, an' oi reckons it'll 'ave ta' be in 4, oi doesn't t'ink oi'll be able ta' eat 6 slices!"

"Arr, jeesuz', Ritchie.." sez' Paddy "Ev'rytyme oi closes me oiyes, oi seez' these terrible pink blotches in front ah' them!"

"Hay! - Jus' fa' 'da record, ya' 'iva seen a psychiatrist, Paddy?" I sez' wid' a sneer.

"Hell, no!" sez' Pads' "Jus' these damn pink blotches!"

It took a couple ah' hours fa' 'da docs ta' pump Paddy's guts dry, bud' 'dey gave 'im 'dem back, an' 'ey wuz' soon on 'da

streets 'gain - 'reckon sum'body shoulda' taught 'da idiot 'da green cross code! - So Paddy follows me outta' 'da hopsickle, hospiticle, err, medical place where 'dey keep patients, an' we races 'cross 'da carpark..

"We'd better use yu'r car!" I sez' ta' Paddy "Mine's bin' a bid' bugged lately!"

"You meanin' it's under hoigh surveillance then, Ritchie?" 'ey askes.

"Nah!" I sez' "Jus' gits' in a cranky mood in hot weather!" so we climbs inna' Paddy's wagon, an' we headed fa' Shirley's bar! Wendy wuz' waitin' fa' us when we got 'dere..

"Hiya', fatso!" she sneers as I squeezes ma' legs under 'da table an' sa' down.

Maybe Wendy wuz' right, maybe I should lose some ah' 'dis stomache - bud' I wuz' divorced so I kinda' reckoned I'd already lost 24-stone ah' ugly flab! Ya' know 'bout 'da only t'ing I eva' 'ad in common wid' ma' ex-wife wuz' 'dat we wuz' married on 'da same day! - An' it wuz' gettin' to a point where I'd 'ave ta' cut down on 'da beer an' 'da burgers soon.

Ya' know once upon a time I use ta' be able ta' walk down 'da main street an' dress straight off 'da peg - bud' 'da neighbors take 'dere washin' in at nights now, so it kinda' ruins 'dat idea!

Bud', like I wuz' inna' pretty lousy mood already t'day, afta' I'd bin' ta' 'da docs - 'told me ta' cut down on 'da fatty foods an' lay off 'da cigars - 'told me ta' try suckin' a lollipop 'iv'ry time I wannid' one - trouble is I could nivva' git' 'da damn t'ings ta' stay alight!

So I finishes ma' Jack an' staggers ta' 'da john ta' take a leek - I coulda' taken a cabbage I suppose, bud' I'd taken 'da cabbage ta' 'da zoo las' week an' it wuz' 'da leek's turn 'dis time! 'Dere wuz' water all ova' 'da floor when I enters, I kinda' wondered whedda' Shirley'd 'ad a fountain fitted, 'till I seez' all 'deez bits ah' paper an' t'ings stuffed down 'da toilet! So bein' 'da nosey type I sorts t'rough 'dem foist, an' I wanders back ta' 'da bar..

I ordered anudda' drink off Shirley an' sa' down 'gain, Shirley wuz' lookin' kinda' cute an' kinky t'night, bud', like I wondered whedda' a guy ah' 'is age should be wearin' skirts 'dat short? Shirley wuz' cryin' when 'ey brought 'da drinks 'round - foist time I eva' seen unconscious drinks a'fore!

"Hay, whut's all 'da tears fa'?" I sez' sippin' ma' Jack an' fallin' asleep, bud' not furlong! - 'Da slap roun' 'da ears off Wendy took care ah' 'da cobwebs in ma' head!

"You're our 1 millionth customer!" he howled - s'bad 'nough cryin' in ya' own beer, without some schmuck doin' it for ya'! "Really?!" I sez', I didn't t'ink 'da place wuz' 'dat big? "So whut's 'da problem?"

"Ever since I inherited this place from my father I've been gettin' these really awful guys comin' round.."

"I know what ya' mean!" sez' Wendy scowlin' 'cross 'da table at me!

"No.. I mean they're after protection money.. I just can't afford it anymore, they're tryin' ta' steal the bar off me, Ritch'!" wimpered Shirl'..

"Hmm, h'interestin' story, almost as h'interestin' as 'dis photo' I found you'd tried ta' stuff downna' john!"

"I was young!" 'ey wimpered "I needed the money!"
"Not 'dat kinda' photo!" I sez' "I mean't 'dis!" an' I 'anded
ova' 'da piccie I'd found..

Ha! I knew 'dat guys ugly mug alright, No Hung Dong, 'da
h'international jewel t'ief an' Chinese eunich!
"An' I can tell ya' Shirl', I won't rest fa' 1 minute 'till 'dis
guys mug's a'hind bars!" I sez' wavin' 'da photo in 'da air!
"Urr..!" I sez' ta' Wendy "ya' wanna' 'nudda' beer while we're
waitin'?" So we finished 'da candle-lit dinner - it 'ad ta' be,
Shirl' ain't paid 'is 'lectric bill in months, an' we headed out
ta' 'da car..

"Da car wuz' waitin' fa' us as we left Shirley's, bud' so were 2
hoods wid' Tommy gunz'..

"You's freeze!" I shouted, 'da hoods wuz' gonna' make a move fa'
it, bud' Tommy 'ad already done a runner, droppin' a grenade as
'ey made off. 'Da h'explosion ripped Wendy's car apart - Wendy
gotta' go, 'dey gotta' go! - t'rowin' us all ta' 'da ground! 'Da
car wuzza' real wreck - bits ah' metal ev'rywhere, an' 'den 'dis
guys skull rolls outta' 'da wreckage..

Paddy stood up, dusted 'imself down an' picked up 'da head fa' me
ta' see!

"jeezus christ, it's Mr Silverstein 'da pawnbroker!" I screams.
"Nah, couldn't be, Ritchie! 'Tis h'an h'amazin' resemblance, that
oi'm sure, but oi still reckons Silverstein's a helluva' lot
taller than this!" an' 'den 'da head spoke!

"Arr, christ!" I sez' ta' Paddy "'Da guy's a jew! Hay, Pads, ya'
unnerstan' any Jewish at all.. At all!?"

"Arr, 'course oi does!" sez' Paddy "If it's shspoken in oirish
'dat is!"

Suddenly 'dis great big guy comes ova', carryin' 'da hoods, 2
roofracks an' 'da gangsters boss, Tommy Gunz, so 'ey dumps 'em
onna' ground, an' 'da cops carries 'em away..

Jeezus, I needed a drink kinda' quick, like, so we staggers back
ta' Shirley's..

Frum' where I wuz' standin' I could sense 'dere wuz' sumt'in'
diff'rent 'bout 'dis guy, maybe it wuz' 'da way 'ey ate 'da glass
afta' ey'd finished drinkin', maybe it wuz' 'da way 'ey cracked
walnuts wid' 'is eyebrows, hell knows?

An' well 'ey mighta' bin' bigger'n 'da h'Empire State Buildin',
bud' so wuz' King Kong - an' 'ey mighta' 'ad a big, hairy chest -
unlike ma' dainty, liddle' self I admit! - bud' so did Lassie!
An' well I usually t'ink I nivva' forgets a face - bud' wid' 'dis
guys mug I'd not only make an exception, I'd try ma' best! - bud'
I guess 'ey wuz' a bid' like a rabid, Cat Vindaloo - one smell
an' ya' feels like t'rowin' up 'gain!

'Ey began ta' tell me 'is story, I listened.. Well, it wuz'
easier 'dat way!

'Seems 'ey'd bin' waitin' fa' 'dis jewel t'ief, No Hung Dong, ta'
come t'rough frum' Chicago, reckoned No Dong 'ad hidden some
stash at Shirley's Bar years a'fore Shirl'd inherited it! 'Dey'd
arranged ta' git' t'gether fa' dinner at Shirl's.. Bud' 'dat wuz'
3 years ago, 'ey'd bin' waitin' eva' since. bud' No Dong still
'adn't showed, guess 'ey knew jus' how bad 'da food really wuz'!

"Bud' whut's Tommy Gunz Little Dick gotta' do wid' all 'dis?" I
sez' - I kinda' recognised Little Ritchie Sukka, I ah' 'da hoods
frum' outside - 'dey all turned round ta' stare at me.. You'd

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t'ink I'd said sumt'in' wrong?

"Little Ritchie's Tommy's hitman, came ta' beat up on old Shirl' 'ere, 'force 'im ta' sell 'da bar, I guess?" sez' 'da big guy. "So who the hell made you Sherlock Holmes, with all the best lines, yet?" screams Wendy, headin' ta' 'da bar furra' 'nuther drink, an' Paddy headed outside ta' call a cab - christ knows whut' 'ey wuz' gonna' call it, bud' 'ey wuz' gonna' call it anyway!

Bud' by 'dis time, wid' a few stiff drinks inside 'im, Shirl' wuz' jus' a mite unhappy 'bout 'da whole t'ing!

"Hell, no Little Dick's gonna' knock me up!" 'ey screams, reachin' unner 'da bar furra' pump-action shotgun!

"You or anybody else wants ta' take this bar 'way frum' me an' they're gonna' git' theirs in spades!" 'ey yells an' squeezes 'da trigger, blowin' a hole bigger'n an Oprah Winfrey pay cheque in 'da west wall!

Seems 'da big guy wuzn't such a bad guy afta' all! 'Ey wuz' workin' unda' cover fa' 'da cops when No Hu^{ng} Dong'd ripped off 'da fancy Clancy diamonds, an' hid 'em in 'da wall whenna' new extension wuz' built!

Kinda' lucky Wendy'd hid 'da resta' 'da dough in 'er bag when 'da cops came 'gain. I wuz' startin' ta' wonder 'bout a season ticket for 'deez boys, 'da 'mounta' rides down town' I'd 'ad ta' take since I started workin' as a dick' fa' hire!

'Least I'd actually git' paid 'dis time an' 'da only stiffs ya'd git' in 'dis bar in future were spirits inna' glass!

'Da End



How to Make a Thingy

How do you write an adventure? What a good question. I don't intend to answer it, well not in the sense of telling you what to write and how to get it published. But, I'll try to explain to you some of the mechanics behind creating an adventure and making it work.

So where do you start. One of the best places is at the begining, and the most obvious begining is with a computer, any computer will do. Personally I use a Spectrum but anything will do.

There you are sitting in front of your computer, thinking "What Now?" (That sounds familiar). Well I'm not writing an article about Basic adventures because that has already been done. I'm only briefly going to touch on utilities (PAW, GAC and QUILL), what I really intend to do is to tell you how to write a utility (I call it an adventure controller) in machine code.

It is obvious that the sections of code that I give will be machine specific to the Spectrum, but, all the different routines will be fully explained and with a little knowledge of other machine codes, the ideas can be translated to different computers.

Whats wrong with PAW, GAC and The QUILL? Nothing at all. They are all very good. They will all help you to turn out professional looking adventures. GAC and The QUILL are perhaps a little dated now with their noun + verb input, but PAW cannot really be faulted. Or can it?

How many PAWed adventures have you seen released by the larger software houses. Surely the dearth of them can't be some fault in the programming. Perhaps it stems from the fact that a PAWed adventure can be loaded back into PAW the utility. Try it and see.

Of course once this has been done, anyone can see how the game is written, and perhaps more seriously, full working copies can be made at any time by selecting "SAVE ADVENTURE" from the main menu. It is quite possible that this is what frightens the big names away from PAW.

So what are the alternatives, one is to use GAC or The QUILL, the other is to write your own programme. This latter course seem to be the best, not only can the adventure be as professional as PAWed games, it is also individual, and as such is a lot more difficult to hack.

What is needed to start writing an adventure controller? Well, obviously some knowledge of machine code is required. This is not as daunting as most people think. Machine code is very basic and the instructions are easy to understand. Certainly to understand this article, your knowledge does not have to be vast as all routines will have comprehensive notes explaining what they do and how they do it.

That having been said, you must still have some idea of machine code and I can certainly recommend two books that I learnt from. (I have no formal computer training at all, I learnt from the same books that I am recommending.) The first book is "Mastering Machine Code on your ZX Spectrum" by Toni Baker (Interface Publications ISBN 0-907563-23-6) and the second is "Spectrum +2 Machine Language for the Absolute Beginner" by Joe Pritchard (Melbourne House Publishers ISBN 0-36161-209-4). Both are informative and interesting books that introduce both the concept and practicalities of machine code in easy stages. Mastering Machine Code also has a listing in both BASIC and machine code for an assembler, the next important piece of equipment.

Any section of machine code programme can never really be thought of as perfect. There are usually ways to improve upon it, and there are always different ways to achieve the same result. The code for the adventure controller is just over 6K in length. It was written over a period of two years (obviously only in spare time and my time was also spent on other projects.) The main part of it was written using just the Spectrum, a television, cassette tapes and a large number of A4 pads. It was not until some time after I started that I acquired some Microdrives and a printer. What a godsend they turned out to be. Having said that, they are not necessary, you can get by with very little.

What is necessary though is an assembler. You can certainly use the one in Mastering Machine Code, but I have used The Code Machine published by Picturesque. The programme contains an Editor/Assembler called EDITAS and a Monitor/Disassembler called MONITOR. Both are excellent programmes, support a range of printers, and assembled code can be saved to cassette, microdrive, through the RS232 of interface one and through a net set up with other Spectrums. A comprehensive manual is included with the package.

The finished adventure controller is both fast and efficient. It contains the following features:

Complex (but not complicated) parser that can manipulate complex input or verb + noun input if required.

Text compression of between 35-40% so that more text can be used in location descriptions.

Smart screen layout with wordwrap and options for either text only or graphics adventures.

Graphics code which will allow you to include pictures with your adventure.

And if that isn't enough, by the end of this article you will have gained enough knowledge of both machine code and the adventure controller that you will be able to alter it to make it as personal as you want it.

Finally, should anyone have any questions during the course of this article, please do write to me and ask. It's no use not understanding a section and then trying to carry on regardless. I will reply to ANY queries I get regarding this adventure controller.

Down to the Nitty Gritty

First of all, I think I should explain about where the controller is located in memory and why. After writing the controller, you will need to run some small BASIC programmes that will make text entry and table entries a little easier. I have chosen location 28000d (decimal) or 6D60H (Hex) for the starting location of the main body of code. This allows space below it in memory for various tables. These table start at 24785d or 60D1H. Why did I choose 28000d, well it seemed like a nice round number at the time. If you wish, you can locate it anywhere providing you leave 6672 bytes between its start and the top of memory. However, if you do choose a different location you will need to change various parameters pointing to location text, object descriptions and response tables etc. Don't worry all these terms will be explained as we get to them.

As can be seen, there are 3215 bytes left aside for tables. This number is a maximum, and allows for 150 locations (for each location there are a possible eight compass exits and each possible direction needs a seperate table ie 8 x 150=1200 bytes), 100 objects, 255 flags and a ram buffer. Should you require only 50 locations, 30 objects and 60 flags, then you will make a saving of over 2000 bytes. This saving can obviously be used for anything your heart desires.

	2 2		2 2		3 3
	4 4		7 8		4 4 FREE
BASIC	7 7	TABLES	9 0	CONTROLLER	6 6 FOR
	8 8		9 0		7 7 TEXT
	4 5		9 0		2 3

The memory map.

So where do we start with the actual controller. The best place seems to be with a blank screen and I intend it to be black and eventually have yellow writing on it. There are excellent routines in ROM for many of the functions I shall carry out, but because of the necessary error trapping in ROM it does tend to slow things down a bit. As you will see, This controller is mostly self contained and calls to ROM are very few and far between.

The Listing

In all listings, comments will start with a semi-colon ";".

The left hand column will contain labels used in assembling the code. If you change these for labels of your own, they must be changed wherever they occur in the code.

The next (and final) column will contain the assembly language that makes up the code.

All numbers are shown in decimal unless followed by H to signify hexadecimal notation.

CLS (clear screen)

To get the screen completely blank, we need to fill it with nothing, literally zero's. Using the LDIR command with BC as a counter, the contents of HL are transferred into DE and then both HL and DE are incremented. BC is decremented. This process continues until the contents of BC are zero.

As most Spectrum users will know, the attribute file is made up of one byte for every printable character position on the screen. This totals 32 columns by 24 rows, a total of 768 bytes. Each byte when examined in Binary code, holds the information for Flash, Bright, Paper colour and Ink colour.

Three Binary Digits can represent a number in the range 0-7. As will be known, colours on the Spectrum are in the range 0-7. As can be seen below, it is easy to enter the chosen colours as binary numbers, and make up the number required in the attribute file.

The total of the byte = 6 decimal and this is what is put into the attribute file. Obviously if you want green paper and red ink (what a disgusting thought) you would make it up as 00100010 = 34 decimal 22 Hex, and this would then be your attribute byte.

ORG 28000

; Register A is preserved upon exit. BC DE HL are all destroyed.

CLS	LD HL,4000H	;Load HL with the start of screen RAM
	LD BC,1800H	;BC is the counter
	LD D,H	;This uses less code than
	LD E,1	LD D,40H
	LD (HL),L	;DE is now loaded with 4001H
	LDIR	;L contains 0 - so loads (HL) with 0
;HL now points at the start of the attribute file and DE points at attributes +1.		
	LD BC,02FFH	;BC is the counter again this time the length of the attribute file
	LD (HL),6	;Black paper and yellow ink
	LDIR	
	RET	

So there we have it, the first small routine. Assemble it and try it to make sure it works.

Now we have managed to clear the screen, we are going to put something back on it. Because I decided to allow graphics, we obviously want somewhere for them to go and not intrude on the text. Shown below is the screen as it will appear. The letter "X" round the outside will be a pattern which can be altered to suit your own tastes.

The section marked INVENTORY will show anything that is being carried and is updated after every player input. The section marked EXITS will display arrows pointing to all available exits, with the letter N representing North. Any exits up, down, in, and out, will be detailed in the text.

Screen RAM

At first glance, Spectrum screen RAM seems complicated. However, for the purpose of this programme you do not need the sort of in depth knowledge that would enable you to write an arcade game. That having been said, you do need a basic understanding of the way that the screen is mapped. The best suggestion I can make is that you read the section on Spectrum screens in "Mastering Machine Code on your ZX Spectrum". I found this chapter an excellent source of information. What follows is purely an overview of screen mapping.

Each printable character position on the screen is made up of 8 bytes. However, these bytes are not numbered sequentially. If you imagine the screen made up of 24 rows down the screen and 32 columns across the screen, it may help the explanation.

The first character position is obviously at the top left hand corner of the screen and is row 0, column 0. This position contains 8 bytes numbered from the top down 0 - 7. The next position on the screen is row 0, column 1 and also contains 8 bytes.

The screen address 4000H is byte 0 (the byte at the top of the character position) in row 0, column 0. This is the very first byte on the screen. The screen address 4001H is byte 0 in row 0, column 1. Screen address 4002H is byte 0 in row 0, column 2. This sequential numbering continues across the top of the screen until byte 0 in row 0, column 31 is 401FH.

Byte 1 in row 0, column 0, is not as would be expected 4020H, but is in fact screen address 4100H. In fact screen address 4020H is Byte 0 in row 1, column 0. The diagram below should help you to understand the layout.

COLUMN NUMBERS

0

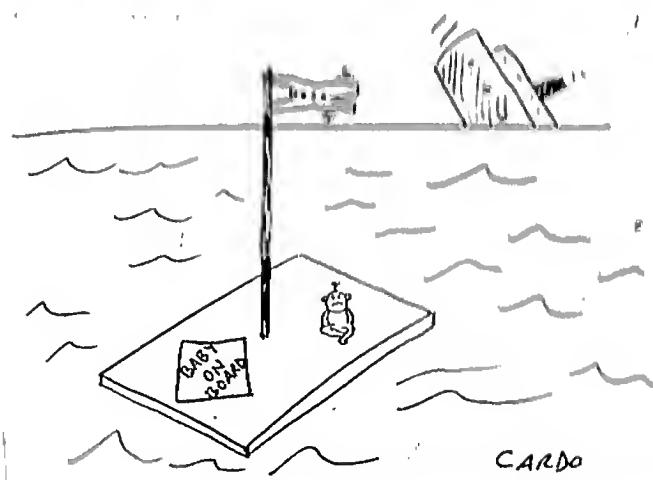
1

31

R	4000H	4001H		A	401FH
O	4100H	4101H		A	413FH
W	4200H	4201H		A	421FH
I	4300H	4301H	*****	*****	431FH
Z	4400H	4401H		A	441FH
E	4500H	4501H		A	451FH
R	4600H	4601H		A	461FH
O	4700H	4701H			471FH
<hr/>					
R	4020H	4021H			403FH
O	4120H	4121H		A	413FH
W	4220H	4221H		A	423FH
I	4320H	4321H		A	433FH
O	4420H	4421H	*****	*****	443FH
N	4520H	4521H		A	453FH
E	4620H	4621H		A	463FH
I	4720H	4721H		A	473FH

You will notice in the next section of code, that the screen is filled in two distinct parts, this is because the Spectrum screen is split into three parts, the upper middle and lower thirds. Each third of the screen is filled in the same way, but each is filled sequentially starting with the top.

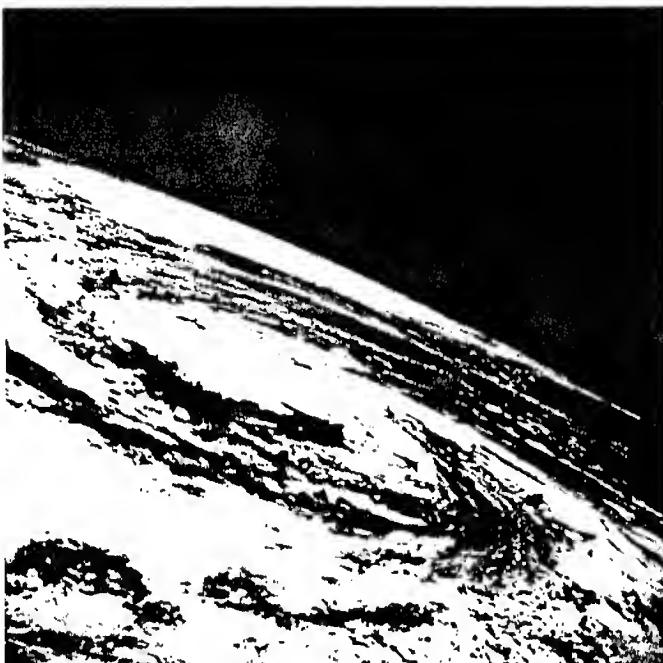
This hopefully explains how screen RAM is memory mapped, and also explains why, when loading a SCREEN# into the Spectrum, the screen loads the top byte of each character line on the first third of the screen before moving down to the next byte of each line.



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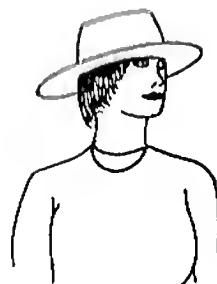
Friends of the Earth FOF KAFW

SOMEWHERE

by Chester 1991



"P.S. I still
love you..."



DO YOU? ...I
ONCE LOVED HIM...



I WAS FAITHFUL,
WASN'T I?



THEN HE TURNED
HIS BACK ON ME...



BUT I'LL FIND A
MAN LIKE HIM AGAIN.



SOMEWHERE...



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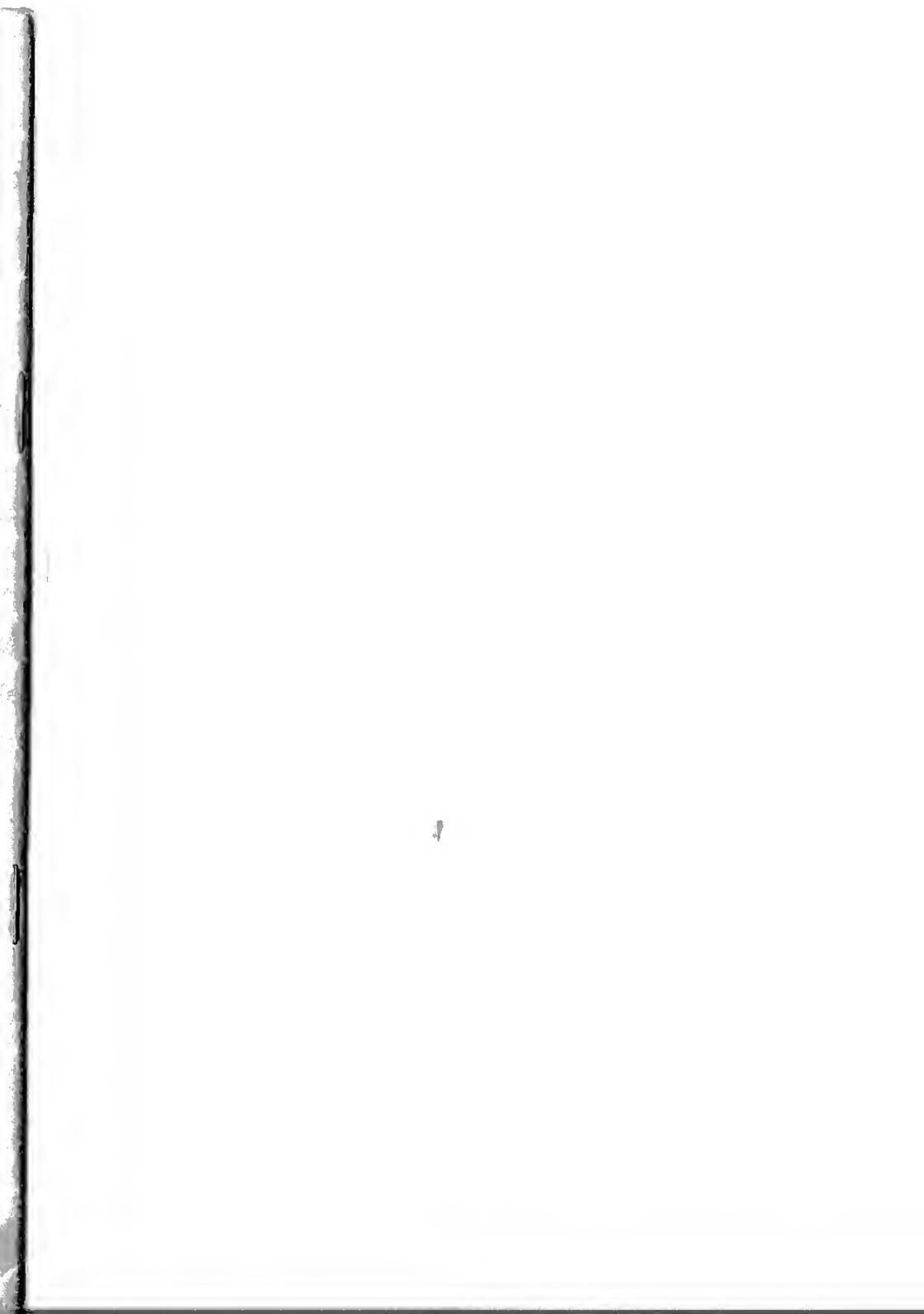
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Computer programmers
Role-playing adventure fans
Armchair adventurers



19/7/92

Dear R,

I was very pleased with your recent letter and I'm very glad you like my magazine so much! It'll be included in the next issue. There's a bug in the Spectrum's "JR" on the line's calculation, or the setting. This is usually either "BEC" or "BECc" — "Branch if the Z flag" (or "BNE" — guess!) I've found immensely useful in my own programs.

Glad you liked "Pride and Prejudice". Stephen doesn't rate it himself, but I was able to get all 300 copies.

Lastly, I was very happy to say you've written something for the Spectrum yourself. I'm pleased to receive whatever you send me. Remember — there's a free issue of "Pride and Prejudice" for anyone who sends me a copy of your program. I use it myself.

P.S. Enjoy issue 17!

Yours sincerely,
Chris

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to receive your
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for all articles
thankfully,

Christopher (The Ed)